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Lebanon

Beirut radio reported the circumstances surrounding the return of William Buckley's remains. A previously unknown group released a videotape showing its two German hostages, the radio disclosed.

Algeria

The Islamic Salvation Front claimed victory in 89 of 124 constituencies, according to preliminary data reported by Algiers radio. Final results were available on turnout, however, indicating participation of 58.55 percent, the interior minister told Algiers television.

Libya

JANA transmitted a Foreign Liaison Committee statement on the Commonwealth of independent states. Al-Qadhdhafi received Yasir 'Arafat, the agency disclosed.

Iraq

A Foreign Ministry statement criticized King Fahd's speech to the recent GCC summit, INA reported, while editorials reported by the agency termed the Saudi king a "traitor."

Saudi Arabia

The crown prince conferred with Syria's Basil al-Asad, who also visited Saudi military installations, SANA reported, citing Riyadh radio.

Yemen

Several public organizations urged citizens not to obey the call for a strike issued in response to a teacher-student dispute, Sanaa radio reported.

Palestinian Affairs

Yasir 'Arafat conferred with the Kazakh president in Alma-Ata, Algiers Voice of Palestine reported. The final statement of a Beirut conference on the intifadah was broadcast by Tehran radio.

Iran

A Foreign Ministry statement reported by Tehran television announced recognition of Russia and the other Commonwealth states.

Israel

Diplomatic relations with the PRC will be established "within four to six weeks," according to Foreign Ministry officials cited by HA'ARETZ following the first day of a visit by a PRC vice foreign minister. "A separate (Palestinian) state will not be established," the envoy to Washington told a public meeting, Tel Aviv radio reported.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Chief Confers With Russian Envoy

NC2612164191 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has received Russian Federation Ambassador to Cairo Vladimir Polyakov, who presented the secretary general a clear and comprehensive picture of the beginning of the Commonwealth and its 11 independent states, the Alma-Ata declaration, and the most important contents of the agreement among these countries, the founding states of the Commonwealth.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid expressed his sincere hopes for the success of the Commonwealth and the establishment of the desired stability. He stressed concern for the continuing support of the Commonwealth and its independent states for Arab causes and the Palestine question.

The Russian ambassador affirmed his country's concern over continuing efforts, along with the United States as a partner, in pushing forward the peace process in the Middle East. In this regard, he stressed President Yeltsin's desire to host the multilateral talks in Moscow at the end of January 1992, as was planned earlier.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat, Kazakh President Meet in Alma-Ata

LD2512232291 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], president of the state of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, and Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, yesterday at the Republican Palace in the capital, Alma-Ata, held an official tete-a-tete meeting to complete the discussion of issues of common concern. The presidents of Palestine and Kazakhstan had held a first official meeting the day before yesterday during which they reviewed a number of important issues. [passage omitted]

Beirut Conference on Intifadah Continues

NC2612091591 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] The Third International Conference in Support of the Islamic Intifadah in Palestine resumes its work in the Carlton Hotel in Beirut today. A morning and evening session will be held to review stands adopted by the participating Islamic and nationalist powers on international and regional developments and their views on the Palestinian situation. In addition, ad hoc committees will make proposals they want approved during the conference's plenary session.

Two sessions were held yesterday. A number of participants representing Palestinian and Lebanese Islamic powers addressed the conference, including Hizballah Secretary General 'Abbas al-Musawi and Minister Marwan Hamadah, representative of the prime minister.

Policies on developments in the Palestinian issue were reviewed during the evening session. During the two sessions, speakers emphasized the need for communication between the heroic intifadah in Palestine and the Islamic and national resistance in Lebanon. They all stressed the need to strengthen ties between these two significant chapters in the contemporary history of our nation.

The speakers condemned Arab concessions in favor of the Zionists and the negotiations initially held in Madrid and continuing in Washington and other world capitals to liquidate the Palestinian cause.

Hizballah Secretary General Sayyed 'Abbas al-Musawi said the intifadah and the resistance are the only real option available to Arab and Muslim nations, adding that this is the least that can be done by the peoples who are targeted by the Zionist scheme, from the Nile to the Euphrates. His eminence stressed that our Muslim people in Palestine have realized that the option of the resistance is the only feasible one. Hence, the intifadah has continued, he said.

In a speech delivered on his behalf by Minister Marwan Hamadah, Prime Minister 'Umar Karami said that this conference has special significance because it favors jihad over capitulation. He said the intifadah in the occupied territories is the first experience of jihad until victory or martyrdom. Karami said the intifadah gave clear-cut evidence that it is the luminous beacon which radiates in the Arab and Islamic arenas and joins forces with the nationalist and Islamic resistance in the south, demonstrating the most magnificent cohesion among the defenders of the same cause.

Ghazi al-'Aridi, political adviser to the Progressive Socialist Party leader, called on the state to extend assistance to the Islamic and nationalist resistance and our people in the south. He suggested that part of the Defense Ministry's budget be allocated to the people of the south instead of buying weapons for the Army, which is built on no specific principle whatsoever.

Muslim Leaders Address Session

NC2612093091 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Excerpts] The Third International Conference in Support of the Islamic Intifadah in Palestine continues its third consecutive day of work in the Carlton Hotel in Beirut today. Two working sessions were held yesterday in which participants stressed the need to maintain Islamic and national unity and to support the intifadah in Palestine and the resistance in the struggling south. The conferees rejected the U.S.-led capitulationist schemes which are being sponsored by certain reactionary Arab regimes, and emphasized that force is the

only feasible way to liberate Palestine and all the lands occupied by the Zionist enemy.

In a speech to the conference yesterday, Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah emphasized that the Arab-Israeli wars have only been theatrical, saying that Arab regimes wasted the lands before losing them.

Brigadier General Rida 'Askari delivered a speech on behalf of the Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon. He said the Palestinian cause is the line between right and wrong and that the Palestinian people have realized that appeasement does not work with the enemy; power is the only way to deal with them. Brother 'Askari described some Arabs as ignorant and some Palestinians as traitors because they believe that America is the only remaining world power following the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism. When, he asked, has communism ever supported the intifadah? If Arabs put treachery aside, he continued, they will force America to submit. If the Islamic world unites, America will fear it and be afraid to do anything, he said. Hence, he added, America is trying to take every state individually.

His Eminence Zuhayr Kanj [a Hizballah member] said the Americans are the cause of all trouble in the world. The Americans caused the USSR to disintegrate and will obstruct unity in Europe, and in the Arab and Muslim worlds, he said. [passage omitted]

Speaking on behalf of Fatah-The Revolutionary Council, Mansur Hamdan applauded the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and demanded that a clear stand be adopted on the so-called peace conference, which is designed to turn our conflict with the enemy into an inter-Arab conflict. He said the Muslim and Arab masses are determined to confront the enemy in the occupied territories and Lebanon. Hamdan urged Islamists and nationalists to unite to avoid a recurrence of the nation's mishaps. He also called for the implementation of the Tehran conference resolutions and for establishing an Islamic and pan-Arab fighting front.

Speaking for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Sa'id Sayf denounced the U.S. onslaught against the region, saying that the liberation of Palestine requires our resources and energy because the balance of power is in America's and Israel's favor. Sayf criticized Gulf rulers, saying that their conduct conflicts with Islamic principles because it pressures Arab governments into serving America's interest.

Deputy Zahir al-Khatib said unity of ranks is the best way to deal with the current historic developments, adding that the resistance powers are capable of uniting their efforts ultimately to upset the balance of power. He stressed that the resistance will be strengthened if the U.S. and Zionist enemy's schemes are exposed. Al-Khatib cautioned against disunity and depletion of resources by differing on the best approach to confrontation. [passage omitted]

Speaking on behalf of the Islamic intifadah in Palestine, His Eminence Mujahid Shaykh Sayyid Barakah attacked Yasir 'Arafat, describing him as an opportunist clown who wasted the Palestinian cause. [passage omitted]

Final Statement Reported

NC2712100591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] The Third International Conference in Support of the Islamic Intifadah in Palestine ended in Beirut yesterday after issuing a statement which, according to our Beirut correspondent, says that renouncing any Palestinian territory whatsoever is tantamount to renouncing Muslim rights worldwide. The statement calls on the forces faithful to Palestinian aspirations to unite and prepare a comprehensive plan to liberate Palestine and defend the Islamic uprising in the occupied territories. It also calls on combatant Muslims to carry out their responsibilities and strongly condemn the renouncing of even one inch of Palestinian territory.

The conference was attended by representatives of Islamic and national liberation groups from Lebanon, Palestine, and other Islamic countries.

Mohajerani, vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, addressed the final session, saying: The United States and the Zionist regime are resorting to a propaganda-psychological war in an attempt to increase disillusionment among the Palestinians and to crush our aspirations.

After Mohajerani's remarks, Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, said that the West's support for Zionism is rooted in history, adding: America and Britain are not supporting Tel Aviv only for material interests; their support for the illegitimate Israeli regime also falls within an ideological framework. Jibril praised the Islamic Republic of Iran for its all-embracing support for the intifadah and the aspirations of the Palestinian people. He called on all Palestinian forces to unite in a spirit of jihad and to plan to confront the dangers threatening the intifadah.

Conference Concludes

NC2712091991 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Excerpt] The Third International Conference in Support of the Islamic Intifadah in Palestine ended last night following three days of discussions and debate on the Palestinian issue and ways to escalate the intifadah and the resistance in south Lebanon, the only means left to liberate our lands following the failure of negotiations. [passage omitted]

PFLP-GC Claims Destruction of Israeli Hotel

NC2412192491 Paris AFP in English 1848 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Beirut, Dec 24 (AFP) - A Palestinian guerrilla group on Tuesday claimed it caused the fire that burned down a hotel in the southern Israeli port of Elat.

Israeli authorities said the fire was accidental.

In a statement issued here, the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), which is not a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said its guerrillas had placed a series of incendiary grenades in the Queen of Sheba Hotel in Eilat "sparking a fire that burned down the building."

In Jerusalem, concurring sources said a candle lit by an Israeli tourist caused the fire on Monday.

The blaze spread quickly because of faulty construction, injuring about 10 people, they said.

Palestinian Group Claims Budapest Attack

NC2512175591 Paris AFP in English 1734 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Beirut, Dec 25 (AFP) - A previously unknown Palestinian group here Wednesday claimed responsibility for an attack in Budapest on a bus carrying Russian Jews emigrating to Israel that seriously wounded two Hungarian policemen.

The Movement for the Protection of Jerusalem, issuing its first statement, said it had "carried out the verdict of God and of justice" with Mos.day's bomb attack at Budapest airport.

Israel and the United States had "stepped up their efforts to produce a demographic change in Palestine by bringing in hundreds of thousands of Jews from around the world," the group said.

Algeria

Further Reportage on National Elections

Prime Minister Comments on Issues

LD2512173791 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali continues his tour in the west part of the country. Today his activities will cover Oran. Answering accusations, Mr. Ghozali yesterday affirmed that his sole purpose was to call Algerians to take part in the elections, noting that he was satisfied because he was not a candidate, like all the members of his government. He criticized practices of some news media which, as he put it, tried to secure the influence of their information with lies. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording by unidentified correspondent from Oran] The prime minister used a new language last night at a meeting at the wilaya [governorate] of Oran building with cadres and representatives of nonpolitical associations. This was when he dealt with political issues in particular. We noticed, for the first time, that Mr. Ghozali mentioned the names of politicians or party leaders who, as he said, he considered to be engaged in a fight against his government and who are afraid of its success. These public figures are, and I quote, the ones who are now leading the FLN [National Liberation Front]: Abdelhamid Mehri and Mouloud Hamrouche, in addition to the current leadership of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] headed by Abdelkader Hachani which, he said, carried out a strategy of using violence in order to take power. He further said that there was an objective collusion between the leaders of the FLN and the FIS against the government.

Concerning the Guemar events, he said they fell under this strategy. As for the latest events—he was referring to the attack against the national gendarmerie in Guemar—they were aimed at creating social tension to instill fear in Algerians and to prompt them to boycott voting. In this respect, the prime minister added that the official FLN did not say a single word condemning the Guemar events, and that this applied also to the other political parties.

Speaking on reforms, he said that those who raised this slogan did not understand the establishment. He was referring to the Hamrouche government. He added that those who caused the present situation in the country were the ones who were talking today. He mentioned Abdelhamid Ibrahimi, the $26-billion man, as he put it, and Belkacem Nabi, the $40-billion man, he called him. He blamed them for the large number of unemployed.

Regarding the law on hydrocarbons, the prime minister stated that both Mouloud Hamrouche and Abdelhamid Mehri had contacted French news media and stated that they would abrogate this law at the next parliament. The prime minister considered that Hamrouche and Mehri were speaking the same language used by [provisional FIS leader] Abdelkader Hachani and that they had connected in particular on the Hassi Messaoud issue [oil field to be exploited jointly with foreign companies], in the same position as Abdelkader Hachani.

It therefore transpires from the prime minister's frank language that he has clearly defined the position of his government on the current political struggle on the eve of the legislative elections, and he has also taken a clear position on the official FLN, as he called it, the leadership of the FIS, and other political parties. [end recording]

'Skirmishes' Reported in Some Areas

LD2612193591 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Dear listeners, we are still talking about the legislative multiparty elections in our country, which are taking place today, 26 December. Colleagues in the studio informed me just a little while ago that skirmishes are taking place in a district in Blida. I do not know if one of our stations is trying to contact us to give us information regarding the multiparty elections.

[Unidentified correspondent] News has reached us here at the wilay headquarters from the head of Ouled Chebel District that skirmishes have broken out among the parties present at the Ouled Chebel center; namely, Hamas [Islamic Society Movement], the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], and the FLN [National Liberation Front]. It also has been learned that the center's head intervened to settle the dispute, while the head of the polling station in that region stressed that there will be no count until the situation is settled.

Following the contact between the information official in the wilaya of Blida and the head of Ouled Chbel District, the latter confirmed that the problem has not been solved yet and that three regions are witnessing similar disorders—Ouled Chebel, Amroussa, and Melaha. [passage omitted]

Interior Minister Praises Results

LD2712002791 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 2251 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Statement by Interior Minister Larbi Belkheir at the Interior Ministry—live]

[Text] May God's peace and blessing be upon you. Ladies and gentlemen: First of all, I apologize that I did not arrive at 2200 as I had promised in order to give you more information about the results relating to the number of voters in all provinces [wilayas].

Ladies and gentlemen, the casting of votes in the first legislative elections touched by political pluralism began this morning as scheduled. This is another marked phase in the history of Algeria [word indistinct].

It is a great honor for us to find ourselves among those men and women who worked for the good handling of the electoral process, although there is a group of skeptics who also worked to cast doubt on goodwill.

On the whole, the voting took place in an atmosphere characterized by calm and tranquillity and without any incidents worthy of mention.

I take this opportunity to extend on behalf of the government our warm and sincere thanks to all citizens, men and women, and to all those who took part directly or indirectly in the good unfolding of the first round of these elections, be they candidates of political parties or independent candidates, as well as all the various associations.

The government also extends its warm and sincere thanks to all the officials and employees of the administration, as well as the services in charge of preserving public security and order who ran this electoral process, with special praise for the role played by television, radio, the press, and the sustained effort exerted by them all. We also extend our warm thanks to the international press, which came in large numbers to cover this event.

Briefly, the government has respected its commitments and fulfilled its promise to organize free and fair elections in complete openness and on time.

I would also thank two dear delegations, one from the Kingdom of Morocco and the other from the Tunisian Republic, for being present here at this decisive day for Algeria. I would like to thank them once more for their presence, which is proof of the Maghreb countries' interest in building the future of the Maghreb and its peoples.

Now I would like to give some provisional results:

The number of registered voters: 13,298,540
The number of candidates: 5,712
The number of electoral districts: 430
The number of polling stations: 31,930

As far as the number of voters and the percentage of the turnout so far, because of difficult communications with a number of provinces, particularly those in mountainous or Saharan areas, the following results will be provisional:

It has been registered that the turnout was more than 60 percent in more than 17 provinces.

The turnout in 23 provinces was between 50 and 60 percent.

However, those results are all provisional—we are awaiting the official results. They will be given directly to you.

The largest turnout was recorded in Ain Timouchent: 71.85 percent.

There is, I think, only one province with a turnout under 50 percent.

Voter Turnout 58 Percent

LD2712024291 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 0200 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Statement by Interior Minister Larbi Belkheir at the Interior Ministry—live]

[Excerpts] Ladies and gentlemen: The results you are about to hear are final. The turnout in the elections was 58.55 percent. I would like to remind you here that the turnout in the 1990 elections in 1990 was 56.34 percent. [passage omitted]

We would like to stress here that a second round of voting will be contested in many cases. As far as Bogie and Tizi Ouzou provinces are concerned, I think the Front of Socialist Forces [FFS] is ahead. However, this does not mean that the result is final. Thank you. [passage omitted]

Islamic Front Claims 89 Seats

LD2712084591 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] today declared that they have won 89 seats in the 124 constituencies from which results have been announced. Abdelkader Hachani, chairman of the provisional national bureau of the FIS, pointed out at a news conference held at dawn today that his candidates will go to the second round in first or second place to contest 35 of the seats that his party did not win outright in the first round of elections. [passage omitted]

Ruling Party, Islamic Front See Compromise

LD2712102791 Paris Radio France International in French 0630 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Algeria is the lead news item with the first pluralist elections in its history. [passage omitted]

At the moment, everyone is giving the impression of wanting to play the card of cohabitation. I will give you an example: The statements by Abdelkader Hachani, provisional president of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], were examined by Anne Dissez:

[Begin recording] [Hachani] The FIS is going to attempt to make the necessary effort to present itself as a prospective alternative government. We consider that the only party responsible for the chaotic situation that the country is experiencing, the crisis situation that the country is experiencing, is the ruling party, in other words the National Liberation Front [FLN]. It will be quite difficult for us, but acceptable nevertheless, to move toward a situation of compromise with this government.

[Dissez] With the whole of the FLN or with part of it?

[Hachani] The current government can present several wings. That could be a part of it, only we consider that the government as represented by Ghozali, the current head of government, by the president of the Republic, or by Hamrouche, the former head of government...[changes thought] we do not consider any government strange. [end recording]

The FLN is talking about joint programs and even a coalition government. FLN Secretary General Abdelhamid Mehri is speaking to Edouardo Pedro:

[Begin Mehri recording] We are going to propose a platform for a joint program of a coalition government, a government of national consensus, because the word I'tilaf can roughly be translated as coalition, but it means agreement. It is less than a union, but it is more positive than a coalition, and it is on the basis of this platform that the different political groups must determine the new strategy. [end recording]

Foreign Ministry Recognition of Commonwealth

LD2612223891 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs today issued a statement saying that Algeria officially recognizes every member of the group of countries forming the Commonwealth of Independent States, which used to be part of the Soviet Union. The statement added that Algeria is ready to establish diplomatic relations with the group.

Libya

Foreign Ministry Statement on Former USSR

LD2612220191 Tripoli JANA in English 1830 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, al-Kanun [December] 25, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Coperation issued the following statement:

The People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation Bureau expresses its welcome for the declaration of independence of the republics: Federal Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Kyrghyzia, Armenia, Moldova, and Georgia, as sovereign states and independent of the U.S.S.R.

It announces that acknowledgement by the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah for the independence of these republics is in accordance with its belief in the right of these nations for self-determination and choice of proper national options by themselves.

The bureau asserts its willingness to continue the excellent friendly and coperative relationships between the Jamahiriyah and the nations of these republics. It affirms, as well, the readiness of the Jamahiriyah to promote these relations for the common interests of all parties.

Palestinian Offices Reportedly Closed

NC2512153791 Paris AFP in English 1507 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Dec 25 (AFP) - Libya has shut down the offices of Palestinian groups on its territory as a goodwill gesture to ease international pressure stemming from the Lockerbie bombing, a Saudi newspaper reported Wednesday.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, citing unnamed sources, said the step was taken on the advice of Egypt, which has sought to mediate in the standoff pitting Libya against the United States and Britain.

Tripoli is refusing to hand over two Libyans charged in the United States and Britain with the destruction of a Pan American World Airways airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 that killed 270.

Libyan authorities have detained two men in connection with the case and have pledged to try them in Libyan courts if warranted.

The office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is exempt from the Libyan measure, according to the paper, because it enjoys diplomatic status as the embassy of the state of Palestine.

Nearly all Palestinian movements under the PLO umbrella have offices in Libya, which have been closed in the last three weeks, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT said, adding that Libyan authorities described the measure as provisional.

Representatives of the groups will able to continue functioning from their residences in Libya, it said.

'Arafat Briefs Al-Qadhdhafi on Asia Visit

LD2612123291 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1120 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, 26 Dec (JANA)—The brother leader of the revolution has received Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. President 'Arafat explained in detail the results of his visits to a number of Asian states. President 'Arafat recently visited North Korea, China, Vietnam, Laos, and Kazakhstan.

North Korean External Trade Minister Visits

Trade Agreement Signed

LD2612210191 Tripoli JANA in English 1825 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, al-Kanoun [December] 25, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—An agreement was signed yesterday between the Great Jamahiriyah and the

Republic of Democratic Korea. The agreement covers coperation in the following areas: trade, investments, industry, marine resources, health, agriculture, construction, communications, transport and scientific research.

The agreement was signed by the secretary of the General Peoples Committee for Communications and Transport, and from the Korean side, by the Minister of Foreign Trade Chong Song-nam. [title as received]

In a speech made on the occasion, the Korean minister praised the efforts of the leader of the revolution towards the development and strengthening of friendly and coperative ties between the two Arab Libyan and Korean nations.

DPRK Visitor Meets With Al-Qadhdhafi

LD2712105291 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1715 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution received Chong Song-nam, North Korean minister of external economic affairs and chairman of the Korean side of the Libyan Arab-Korean joint committee. During the meeting, the Korean minister of external economic affairs conveyed a verbal message to the brother leader of the revolution from the Korean president in which the DPRK president emphasizes the North Korean people's solidarity with the people of the Great Jamahiriyah in the face of the fabricated American and British allegations.

Minister Departs After Talks

LD2612211291 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1130 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Tripoli, 25 Dec (JANA) Chong Song-nam, DPRK minister of external economic affairs, and his delegation left Tripoli this morning after a visit to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah during which he took part in the 8th meeting of the joint Libyan Arab-DPRK committee on economic and social cooperation.

Tunisia

Government Recognizes Former Soviet Republics

LD2612004991 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has sent congratulatory cables to the presidents of the eleven Republics that recently formed the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued the following statement:

Following the Alma-Ata agreement, which was signed on 21 December 1991 between the eleven republics that formed the Commonwealth of Independent States:

The Tunisian Government notes with satisfaction the development of the situation resulting from such a historical event whether inside the new entity or outside it;

The Tunisian Government announces its recognition of those republics. It also expresses its satisfaction with the unfolding changes that have been affirming the march of the region's peoples toward democracy;

The Tunisian Government receives with satisfaction the emergence of the new bloc on the international scene; hoping that such a bloc will be able to contribute tangibly and positively to the setting up of an international order that will meet humanity's deep aspiration for freedom, justice, peace, and security.

Sudan Revokes al-Nahdah Leader's Passport

NC2412154891 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 dec 91

[Text] According to press reports published in Tunis today, the Sudanese regime has revoked the diplomatic passport of Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of the banned Tunisian Islamic al-Nahdah Movement.

Tunisian officials in May uncovered a plot by the al-Nahdah Movement to overthrow the regime in Tunisia and to assassinate the Tunisian president and some ministers. The Tunisian Government also accused the 'Umar al-Bashir regime [in Sudan] of supporting the al-Nahdah Movement.

Karoui Returns From Egypt, Criticizes al-Nahdah

LD2412103491 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Hamed Karoui returned today to Tunis from Egypt, where he had led a Tunisian delegation to the second session of the higher Tunisian-Egyptian joint commission. [passage omitted]

In reply to a question on religious extremism, Hamed Karoui said: The so-called al-Nahdah Movement in Tunisia is nothing but a terrorist gang, which plans assassinations and blood-shedding, and the destruction of the pillars of civic society. He said that the Tunisian people confront these gangs, and adhere to the state of law and institutions and options of the 7 November changes. [passage omitted]

Bahrain

Independence of Former Soviet Republics Recognized

JN2612130291 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1130 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Excerpt] Manama, 26 Dec (WAKH)—The State of Qatar has decided to recognize the independence of the Russian Republic, as well as all of the other republics that are members of the Commonwealth. [passage omitted]

Amir Receives Oral Message From al-Qadhdhafi

JN2512082191 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0720 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Kuwait, 25 Dec (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain, has received an oral message from the Libyan president, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, dealing with current developments.

The message was delivered by Ahmad Qadhdhaf al-Damm, envoy of the Libyan president, when the amir of Bahrain received him in Kuwait today.

The meeting was attended by the delegation accompanying the amir of Bahrain.

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Meets With Son of Syria's al-Asad

JN2612102291 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Riyadh, 26 Dec (SANA)—Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi Arabia's crown prince, met with Staff Major Basil al-Asad in Riyadh the night before last.

Riyadh radio reported that the meeting was attended by Major General Mit'ib Bin-'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, commander of the King Khalid Military College, as well as by the head of the National Guard's Military Organization and a number of princes and military officials.

United Arab Emirates

Independence of Former Soviet Republics Recognized

JN2612182891 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1755 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 26 Dec (WAKH)—Shaykh Hamdan Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, minister of state of the United Arab Emirates [UAE] for foreign affairs, has declared that the UAE Government has decided to recognize the new Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS], which comprises 11 republics; namely, the Russian Federation, The Ukraine, Belarus, Moldava, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrghyzia, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, and Turkmenistan.

In a statement to the EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY, he pointed out that the recognition of these republics came to reflect the UAE Government's principled course, which respects popular rights to self-determination, as well as the determination of their own futures.

Shaykh Hamdan Bin Zayid Al Nuhayyan affirmed the UAE's eagerness to establish ties of friendship and cooperation with all republics in the CIS. Furthermore, he voiced the UAE Government's readiness to bolster and cement these ties in all spheres in the interest of all within the context of the new world order.

The white-blue-red flag of the Russian Federation was raised over the premises of the former Soviet Embassy in the UAE. On 21 December, the red flag of the former Soviet Union was brought down from the embassy building.

President Receives Message From al-Qadhdhafi

JN2512104791 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0905 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Kuwait, 25 Dec (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], has received a message from the Libyan president, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, dealing with current Arab developments.

The message was delivered by Ahmad Qadhdhaf al-Damm, envoy of the Libyan president, when his highness received him this morning at his place of residence in Kuwait.

The meeting was attended by the delegation accompanying his highness.

Yemen

Eritrean Leader Arrives, Makes Statement

JN2312190191 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMR 23 Dec 91

[Text] Brother Isaias Afewerki, secretary general of the Eritrean provisional government [name and title as heard], arrived in Sanaa this afternoon at the head of a delegation on a visit to our country lasting several days.

In a statement to SABA', he explained that he would discuss with officials in our country developments in Eritrea, the political situation in the Horn of Africa, and bilateral relations in particular within the framework of regional joint interests. He was received by first deputy prime minister, brother Dr. Hasan Muhammad Makki; Foreign Ministry under secretary, brother Ahmad Dayfallah al-Khuzaym; a number of Foreign Ministry officials; a delegate from the Presidential Protocol Office; and a representative of the Eritrean provisional government in Sanaa.

Salih Meets Eritrean Leader

JN2612132691 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, Presidential Council chairman, has received Isayas Afewerki, leader of the Provisional Government of Eritrea, who is currently visiting our country. Brother Hasan Muhammad Makki, first deputy prime minister, also attended the meeting. The talks dealt with fraternal relations between the two countries and ways to bolster them, as well as developments in the Horn of Africa and security in the Red Sea region.

During the meeting, the brother chairman offered congratulations for the major victory achieved by the Eritrean revolution, which constitutes an important gain for Yemen and the Arab nation. He stressed our country's willingness to enhance its fraternal ties with Eritrea and to bolster prospects for cooperation in all fields in the service of mutual interests, the historic relations between the Yemeni and Eritrean peoples, and the Arab nation. He stressed that our country is eager to support security and stability in the Horn of Africa. The meeting was attended by brother Ahmad Dayfallah al-'Uzayb, under secretary at the Foreign Ministry, and the representative of the Provisional Government of Eritrea in Sanaa.

Citizens Urged To Ignore Call for Strike

JN2112110191 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] A number of parties, mass organizations, and social figures have asked brother citizens and students to ignore a call for strikes, demonstrations, and marches raised under the pretext that a teacher made a mistake, spoke ill, or abused his duty.

The Popular Forces Union [ittihad al-quwa al-sha'biyah], the Truth Party [hizab al-haqq], the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the Nasirite Popular Organization, the [word indistinct] Front, the Nasirite Corrective Front [jabhat al-tashih al-nasiriyah], the Doctors and Pharmacists Union, the Engineering Union, the Yemen Students Union, the General People's Congress, and the Yemeni Socialist Party issued a statement yesterday which said: While firmly rejecting all encroachments on the nation's principles and its religious sanctities, and while denouncing and renouncing before God all those who harm them, we reject any wrong political exploitation of all isolated incidents with the political goal of leading to sedition and anarchy.

The statement added: The most important means of protecting democracy is through its good application. Therefore, any case or matter in which an insult to creed is proved can be judged by the Constitution and valid laws and referred to law and justice. This is the most sound and best way to deliver a verdict on such issues pertaining to God's word and not through resorting to any form of sensationalism which could affect the source of justice.

The statement said: Therefore, we regard the statement, written on behalf of the students' parents without their knowledge, as improper. We urge our citizens and students to ignore the call for strikes and demonstrations. Such activities are uncalled for at this time, since the truth has not been ascertained, since the government's stand on this issue is not yet known, and since it is not certain whether the government has really fulfilled its duties or shirked its responsibilities.

The statement appealed to citizens and students to cooperate with the democratic forces, which are exerting all their efforts to consolidate democratic work, to build institutions for the state and for the supremacy of the law, and to foil the enemy plots that seek to undermine these national gains by exploiting the atmosphere of confusion, anarchy, and lawlessness.

The statement asked the Prosecutor's Office and the judicial organs to assume responsibility for the investigation and to try those who trespass against the nation's principles and harm its sanctities no matter who they may be.

Foreign Ministry Source on Fahd's GCC Speech

JN2612192191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1850 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 26 Dec (INA)—In a statement to INA, an official Foreign Ministry source said: Once again, Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz adopts an exposed hypocritical stand to confirm the proverb which says: He who grows on something gets used to it. He delivered a speech before his partners in the so-called Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] in which he, in an exposed hypocritical tone, spoke about what he described as sad and bitter feelings toward the Iraqi people's suffering as a result of what he termed Iraq's refusal to fulfill its international commitments.

Fahd shed crocodile tears for the Iraqi people's suffering, forgetting that the sons of our people in Iraq, the masses of our Arab nation, and the good people in the world are fully aware of the fact that Fahd, in particular, is the most important agent of America in the Arab region, that he has devoted himself to serving colonialism, and that he turned the land of Najd and Hejaz [Saudi Arabia] into a springboard for aggression against Iraq.

Fahd's false humanitarian claims cannot conceal the fact that the Saudi rulers and their likes of the agents of foreigners are trying, at Arab and international forums, to implement the chapters of the conspiracy against Iraq just as they were given to them by the United States and its allies, and are doing their utmost to maintain the unjust blockade and the suffering of our people's sons. This is because those defeated people believe that by killing women and children, they can enslave Iraq, undermine its integrity, and destroy its lofty people—the people of civilization and jihad.

He who professes to be sympathetic toward our people's cause does not pay bribes and huge amounts of money from the funds of the people of Najd and Hejaz to maintain this blockade and to prolong the suffering of the people, as happened at meetings of the Islamic foreign ministers in Istanbul, and also at the Dakar Islamic summit, where the Fahd regime's delegation insisted on the issuance of a resolution by the summit calling for maintaining the blockade against the Iraqi people, despite the fact that several honorable delegations voiced their opposition to the proposal.

We would like to say to Fahd and his kind of foreign agent that the Iraqi people are here to stay just like the lofty mountains, that they are lying in wait for them, and that Iraq and its courageous leadership will confront this unfair blockade with an unshakable determination until the dawn of truth breaks; and then the agents will be scorched with their disgrace forever. Just wait and see.

'Bush's Slave' Fahd Guilty of 'Treachery'

JN2712110391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0833 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Baghdad, 27 Dec (INA)—Two Iraqi newspapers have stressed that Iraq—which is following Fahd's positions and insistence on the embargo and on hostility—realizes that these positions are those of a person who has fallen into the quagmire of treachery and who lacks any affiliation with Arabism, Islam, or honor.

In editorials published here today, the two papers describe the positions adopted by the agent Fahd, Bush's slave in conspiring against Iraq, as flagrant and exposed to everyone.

In its editorial, AL-THAWRAH explains that there is no bottom line for treachery; whoever falls into the quagmire of treachery will find it to be a bottomless pit. He will continue to fall, pushed by the orders of his masters to whom he is submissive, contrary to the will and interests of his own people and nation.

The paper continues: This is evident in the positions and policies of the Saudi ruler, Fahd, with regard to Iraq and its people. Fahd chose hostility to Iraq, a hostility which is continuing. This traitor cannot justify his hostility to Iraq, nor can he explain his persistence in this hostility ever since he brought in the forces of invasion and turned the land of the message into a launching point for the U.S.-Atlantic invasion forces; even now, he is leading those who call for continuing the embargo on the people of Iraq. Iraq's policy was never hostile to the brother Arab citizens in the Arabian Gulf. The lie about Iraq's threat to Saudi Arabia was never proven. On the contrary, events have disproved the allegations of Fahd and his master Bush. Despite this, he continues his hostility in a clear and exposed manner, with no justification or logic other than the hostility falsehood has against right, the fear vileness has of honor, and the fear of the murderer and the traitor of the steadfast bastion that safeguards its honor and pride. [passage omitted]

In its editorial AL-QADISIYAH says: The positions adopted by the agent Fahd in conspiring against Iraq have become clear and exposed to all. He was the tool of Bush, the U.S. Administration, and the Croseuses of Kuwait in an unjust economic war which sought to flood the oil market and shatter the structure of oil prices, thereby destroying the Iraqi economy prior to the 2 August 1990 events. Fahd also participated in paving the way for the brutal aggression and in preparing the atmosphere for it on the Arab and international levels.

He worked diligently for a speedy U.S. aggression and effectively contributed to financing the aggression in broad daylight, disregarding Arab dignity, values, and sanctity. Moreover, he desecrated the land of Najd and Hejaz [Saudi Arabia] with the vices of the American soldiers and turned it into a launching point for strikes against proud Arab Iraq. He, along with his worn-out regime, took part in the so-called "carpet bombing," namely, the process of destroying civil and vital installations in Iraq and targeting the people of Iraq for 45 days. [passage omitted]

Concluding its editorial, the paper stresses: In the land of the Arabs, the land of Mesopotamia, the historic, symbolic leader Saddam Husayn stands tall. All agents and

traitors are dwarfed before his loftiness and his great heroic struggle for his people and nation. Proud Iraq, under its gallant leader Saddam Husayn and its noble and zealous people, is not affected by the embargo; it does not bow to the tempests of evil.

On the contrary, the leader of Iraq is a lofty mountain that shuts Iraq off from the wind of evil. The unjust embargo will be eroded by the determination, courage, and chivalry of the hero Saddam Husayn and by the awareness, patience, and steadfastness of the proud Iraqis.

God is great, and victory will be ours.

Accursed be the agents and the dwarfs.

Oil Minister Receives Jordanian Energy Minister

JN2112133791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1148 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec (INA)—Oil Minister Usamah 'Abd-al- Razzaq al-Hiti today met with Jordanian Energy and Mineral Resources Minister 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib, who is currently visiting Iraq. They discussed cooperation between the two fraternal countries in the oil industry field and ways to promote it.

The Oil Ministry under secretary also attended the meeting.

Ministry Sees No Lack of Liquid Gas, White Oil

JN1912175291 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 17 Dec 91 p 8

[By Salah al-'Abd]

[Excerpts] Baghdad—An official source at the Oil Ministry has assured citizens that there will be no shortage of liquid gas or white oil during this winter season.

The source said that the production of liquid gas has increased to 4,000 tonnes a day; that is, equal to 400,000 cylinders a day. This represents a surplus of 100,000 cylinders above local consumption demands.

The source added that the production of white oil also exceeds citizens' needs for this season.

Tahah Humud, senior Oil Ministry under secretary, has said that the ministry is currently facing a shortage of the necessary number of empty gas cylinders, due to the halt in import resulting from the economic embargo imposed on Iraq. He indicated that the ministry has declared its desire to buy empty gas cylinders from citizens for 50 dinars each. [passage omitted]

He added that since last June, the ministry began supplying citizens with super gasoline, the quality of which is less than that produced prior to the aggression. Gasoline currently being produced is 83 octane, while gasoline produced before the aggression was 90-91 octane. He indicated that this is a result of the scarcity of available additives. He also indicated that the gasoline currently being produced serves the required purpose and has no adverse effects on automobile engines. [passage omitted]

Cabinet Grants Incentives for Oil Sector Workers

JN2312203291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2010 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Dec (INA)—The Council of Ministers held its routine session under Prime Minister Muhammad al-Zubaydi today. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz attended.

The council discussed topics on the agenda and made the necessary decisions and recommendations. These include incentives for workers in the oil sector to utilize material and human energies in that sector, to upgrade workers' competence, and to encourage initiatives and teamwork.

The council recommended that the draft law on universities and private colleges be forwarded to the Presidential Council for possible processing.

Columnist on 'Ethical Collapse' of 'Traitors'

JN1912095291 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 17 Dec 91 p 8

["Final Word" column by Hamid Sa'id]

[Text] In his recent statements, the leader president made reference to certain political and media circles undertaking the dissemination of reports on coup attempts in Iraq. Such an undertaking seeks to confuse the market in Iraq and reassure and strengthen the worthless group that accepted belonging to the enemies of their homeland and people.

That reference puts us face to face with a certain fact which can be expressed in a simple question: Despite all the military, information, and political buildup, and despite all the public and secret allocations, which were provided on an unprecedented level, what share of our people have the enemies managed to obtain, and who were the people whom the aggressors won to their ranks?

It is a trivial share indeed and contains only trivial names of trivial people. They are trivial not only because they have no political or social weight, and not only because they have no influence, but because most of the people in that trivial minority are repulsive because of their personal character and ethical collapse. When I look at some of these names, I feel quite confident and ridicule those who have dealt with them more than I ridicule these people themselves.

I also say that if such people can be donated, then maybe we should donate them. It is a sign of recovery if these people keep away from us. Equally, their acceptance in the camp of the enemies is a sign of stupidity and shortsightedness.

Let us talk frankly on the level of the media. Let us mention names like Hasan al-'Alawi, Ibrahim al-Zubaydi, and Arshad Tawfiq. We then ask: Do such people have any influence on any honorable individual? Is their presence on any side in the interest of that side?

Some might say: But some of these people were on the side on which you now stand. I would say: No. They know that I was never deceived by people like these, not because I claim to be brilliant or have an amazing talent for judging people, but because adopting the ethical standard—a standard that never fails—makes it easy to know the truth about them. The ethical defect is the major source from which the enemies take their share.

Thus, the mission of our people's enemies becomes very difficult when they try to influence the good citizens who care about their national and personal reputation, the reputation of their families, and the dignity of their children. What do traitors leave for their children?

Showing leniency on the ethical aspect, not only on the official level, but also in our day to day relations, will intentionally or unintentionally lead to the entrenchment of the state of the absence of values and give the homeland's enemies a share bigger than what they would get if inflexibility is shown when applying this standard.

Defense Minister Inspects Army Corps Sector

JN2412145491 Baghdad INA in English 1334 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, Dec 24, INA—General 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, defence minister, inspected operations sector of the Third Corps.

The minister met commander of the corps and senior officers and discussed some obstacles and means necessary for overcoming them.

The minister hailed the strong and firm attitude of staff of the corps and their dear sacrifices in defending Iraq's security and sovereignty under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn.

Air Force Chief Said Killed in Baghdad Blast

JN1912124191 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 12 Dec 91 pp 1, 11

[By a SANA correspondent in Tehran]

[Excerpt] Eyewitnesses who have recently arrived in Tehran from Baghdad have drawn a tragic picture of the situation in Iraq. They said the economic situation is seriously deteriorating with prices rising by dozens of times.

According to the eyewitnesses, it is now difficult for low-income people to secure the minimum requirements for living or even stay alive. Unemployment is also sweeping Iraq, especially now that some Army personnel were demobilized, industry has come to a virtual halt, and agricultural production has dropped to less than one quarter of the past level, as noted by the agriculture minister of the Iraqi regime.

The eyewitnesses further said that the Iraqi authorities confiscate relief food sent by international organizations and distribute it to the henchmen of the regime.

On another level, the opposition Iraqi newspaper AL-JIHAD has said that Muzahim Mus'ab al-'Abdallah, commander of the air force of the Iraqi regime, was killed in a huge explosion in al-Jadriyah in Baghdad's al-Karradah al-Sharqiyah some time ago. Two sons of the Iraqi regime's Defense Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid were also killed in the explosion.

The paper said that the explosion took place one hour after the end of a private meeting for special guards and security forces attended by al-Majid. Some Iraqis believe that the attack is part of score settling within the regime's organs, while others believe that the opposition forces may be behind the operation.

In another development, Iraqi opposition sources say that the defense minister of the Iraqi regime was the target of an assassination attempt by one of his bodyguards, 'Ammar Latif. Latif, from Karkuk, was killed on the spot. The sources stressed that all members of Latif's family were arrested. [passage omitted]

Paper Comments on Saddam's Reply to Coup Reports

JN2012132991 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 18 Dec 91 p 8

[Sabah Mirza article: "We Defy You, O You the Vicious"]

[Text] Free citizens, Communique No. 1 issued by the command and signed by our beloved leader Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, expresses our people's aspirations to freedom, progress, and humanism, as well as the objectives of the glorious 17-30 July revolution and the principles and ideology of our party. It is also a reply to the false accusations and claims made by the United States, the enemy of mankind, that a coup will take place. We have searched for the coupists but did not find them. To silence their hireling trumpets, we carried out the coup and issued the first communique, about which struggler Saddam Husayn spoke in his address before several of our valiant Armed Forces commanders and officers.

Perhaps what I have just said is some form of political commentary or an expression of the impression every Iraqi might have with regard to describing what the leader of victory and peace said to a group of military commanders and officers. This also provides a reply to the big question with which the leader had surprised these rancorous people: "What shall we do vis-a-vis this desire which no one will fulfill for them? Nothing remains except that we, you and I, arrange a military coup." The leader said this because he has confidence in

his people, because the people trust their leader and love their valiant knights, and this will further bind them together to confront enemy conspiracies against our people and our impregnable homeland, to adopt an honorable stand, and to safeguard the lofty achievements and human civilization which dates back more than 6,000 years.

The leader's smile, full of challenge when issuing this communique, represents the loftiness of the history which has been forged by decisive actions, real courage, wisdom, and the intelligence of great leaders coupled with daring, accurate timing, and decisive reply, not to mention the right venue and the right issue. It also affirms that the banner of defiance, which flutters with pride, will not be brought down in the homeland of pride and justice. O you the vicious, who try to spread your venom, be accursed because we defy you with our leader, our steadfastness, and our patience. We defy you with our people and with our valiant Armed Forces. We defied you in all the battles of justice and triumphed because we have right on our side.

We defy you while we repeat what our daring leader has said: Can one stage a coup against oneself? As long as there are principles and people who believe in principles, this alone is sufficient to prevent any plot. Accursed be the vicious.

Presidency Against Sale of Government Property

JN2312165591 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 22 Dec 91 p 1

[Text] AL-THAWRAH has learned that the Presidential Office has approved the Council of Minister's Decision No. 1, adopted during the council's 36th session on 9 September, to defer the sale of government property.

The Council of Ministers informed all ministries to act in accordance with the decision and to annul all sales conducted after the decision was made.

New Kurdish Party Established in Irbil

NC2612161691 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1418 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] As part of the organized presence to stand up to reckless Saddam, our Kurdish brothers have established a new party called the Conservatives Party. Thirty heads of our Kurdish tribes in the Irbil district recently set up a new organized party to confront and stand fast in the face of 'Aflaqite terrorism. These tribes live in the area between (Jali 'Alibat) and Harir.

The new party is headed by 'Umar Agha (Turchi), who is a brother of one of the leaders of the tribes included in the party. God bless the hands of our revolutionaries in the north and the south until the removal of the infidel 'Aflaqite regime.

Opposition Leader on 'New Political Entity'

NC2612200491 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1418 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, leader of the Iraqi Islamic opposition, has spoken about the future of our rebellious Iraq. He stated: At this stage, we are thinking about establishing a political entity that would be capable of, first, adequately representing the Iraqi people in a way compatible with their democracy and the existing political situation inside Iraq. Second, it should be capable of rallying the people and the Army around it.

These remarks by Ayatollah al-Hakim, according to our foreign sources, came in reply to questions addressed to his eminence by reporters at the conclusion of his recent Damascus news conference. Our foreign sources add that Ayatollah al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], has noted that the new political entity of Iraq must be able to deal with the international community and world public opinion, gaining legitimacy from the direction of the people's activity, not the regime's activity.

Ayatollah al-Hakim noted that the Kurdish people are part of our people, and no plan could be devised to [word indistinct] our Kurdish people, with whom we have strong links.

PRC Vice Foreign Minister Continues Visit

Ties Expected in 4-6 Weeks

TA2512094791 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Dec 91 p 44

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[Excerpt] China will establish diplomatic ties with Israel within four to six weeks. A signing ceremony will be held during Foreign Minister David Levi's official visit to Beijing. These assessments were voiced yesterday by senior Foreign Ministry officials in Jerusalem following the first day of talks of PRC Vice Foreign Minister Yang Fuchang. [Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 25 December, in a report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer on pages 1 and 13, adds: "Israel and China are on very close to establishing diplomatic ties, and yesterday, Foreign Minister David Levi was invited to China."]

Yang Fuchang, the most senior Chinese figure to have ever arrived on an official visit to Israel, held a 45-minute talk yesterday with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and a 90-minute talk with Foreign Minister David Levi. The talks revolved around the peace process, the Israeli-Arab conflict, and bilateral issues, including the establishment of ties between the two countries and the level of these ties.

Shamir and Levi briefed the guest in great detail on the peace process, stressing that China can play a positive role in it. The Chinese vice foreign minister was particularly interested in the preparations for the regional conference due to convene in Moscow in late January. He emphasized his country's desire to take part in the conference and to play an active role in the process.

The prime minister and the foreign minister told the guest that to be able to participate in the regional conference, China will have first to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. The Chinese vice foreign minister pointed out that his government has already endorsed the decision to establish relations with Israel, although no final date for that has been set.

A senior figure participating in the talks with the Chinese delegation said last night that disagreements within the Beijing government have delayed the announcement on the establishment of ties with Israel.

He further stated that the PRC Foreign Ministry has been pushing toward the immediate establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, which it believes will advance China's international standing in general and its ties with the United States—through its Jewish lobby—in particular. This step, however, has encountered opposition in the PRC National Defense Ministry and the defense-related industries, which fear that the step will damage China's relations with the Arab world and sabotage their arms deals. [passage omitted]

Peres: Ties 'Very Close'

TA2612200991 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Report by Alon Ben-David from the Labor conference—live]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Ben-David] This evening, the Chinese vice foreign minister was the guest of Labor Chairman Shim'on Peres. The two held a long meeting, at the end of which, as usual, the Chinese official refused to talk to the media.

Knesset Member Shim'on Peres was also reluctant to disclose the content of his discussion with the Chinese vice foreign minister or discuss the PRC official's impression from his visit in Israel. Peres was willing to talk to us briefly. Good evening Mr. Peres.

[Peres] Good evening.

[Ben-David] How do you view the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties with the PRC after your meeting with the Chinese vice foreign minister this evening?

[Peres] I believe it is very close and that it is self-evident.

[Ben-David] Are they interested in establishing relations?

[Peres] I would not say things on their behalf. I believe that they even wanted to do it before the USSR did. I told him that now we have relations with the USSR, but we do not have the USSR. In any event, I believe it is a matter of a very short time.

[Ben-David] Thank you.

And, as we reported earlier, Labor no longer speaks of separating the state from the religion. Starting tonight, they speak of separating religion from politics.

PRC To Open News Agency Office in Jerusalem

TA2412202591 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Report by political correspondent Gadi Sukenik]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The Chinese Government today officially requested to open an office of its news agency in Jerusalem. It has an office in Cairo. Dr. Yosi Olmert, Government Press Office director general, sent a positive reply today.

Herzog Telegrams Gorbachev; Embassy Plans Noted

TA2612054691 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] President Hayim Herzog has sent a telegram to Mikhail Gorbachev in which he notes the key role played by the former Soviet leader in world history. President Herzog also pointed out it was under Gorbachev that the gates of the Soviet Union were opened to Jewish emigration and diplomatic relations were renewed between the

Soviet Union and Israel. Herzog wished Gorbachev success on behalf of the people of Israel.

Israel is opening consulates and embassies in the republics that will form the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS], which now replaces the Soviet Union. The first consulate will be established in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine. It will be headed by a diplomat from the embassy in Moscow. Israel's ambassador to Moscow, Arye Levin, arrived yesterday in Kiev to set up the consulate. On January 1st, an Israeli delegation will tour the three Baltic states to discuss the location of Israeli legations. The next step will be to determine the location of consulates in the Asian republics and in Georgia.

Meanwhile, the Soviet ambassador to Israel, Aleksandr Bovin, will remain in his post, but he will now represent Russia.

IDF General on Civil Guard, Deportations

TA2712063291 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Interview with Major General Dani Yatom, commander of the Central Command, by Dani Levi and Yoni Ben-Menahem on 26 December; from the weekly "Meeting" program—recorded in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; processed from Hebrew]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Levi] Do you feel that the decision to hasten the establishment of a civil guard will help eliminate the existing friction between the settlers and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]?

[Yatom] I personally feel that the idea of a civil guard, as presented by the defense establishment, is a good one. The intention is to enable the Jewish settlers living in Judaea and Samaria—and inside the perimeters of the Jewish settlements—to act within the framework of the civil guard, in the same way as in many parts of the State of Israel. I believe that the residents' sense of security, as well as their actual security per se, inside the settlements could be heightened by activating the civil guard. One must remember that the IDF, together with all the other security forces and the police, is responsible for maintaining both security and law and order. Any activity must be carried out after coordinating with the security authorities and after receiving their authorization.

[Ben-Menahem] Do you not fear that the settlers could use the establishment of the civil guard to expand their authority to operate outside their settlements?

[Yatom] I do not fear this. The minute one defines....[changes thought] after all, we are discussing something that does not yet exist. No permission or confirmation regarding the establishment of such a body has been given yet. At this stage, there is no civil guard in the Jewish settlements of Judaea and Samaria; however, I estimate and am also completely certain that the minute the decision to set up a civil guard is made and its operational limits are clearly defined, it will not deviate from its mandated authority.

[Ben-Menahem] There will be no activity along the traffic axes?

[Yatom] There will be no activity along traffic axes. No activities other than those of the IDF and the security services are permitted along the traffic axes today. In the future as well, any activity will have to receive prior permission.

[Levi] I would like to ask you about deportations, General. After the recent terrorist attacks, there were reports and rumors that the authorities intend to deport from Judea and Samaria several activists belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Did such a plan exist? Does it exist? Do you think deportation is still productive?

[Yatom] From the beginning of the intifadah to this very day, a number of activists from both Judaea and Samaria and from Gaza have been deported to areas beyond Israel's borders. The deportation issue comes up from time to time; it is still relevant, and it is reviewed periodically. The decision to implement the idea of deportation is subject to a very complex and very broad maze of considerations. All such decisions must be made as demanded by the circumstances. I assume the moment another such decision is made, everyone will know.

[Levi] But do you believe this punishment is still effective? Can it put an end to terrorist attacks such as those perpetrated in Judaea and Samaria?

[Yatom] We are forced to resort to a very extensive range of measures, methods, and operative styles. Activities against terrorism, against the violent core, comprise a range of components. In my opinion, deportation is an effective weapon, an effective measure in our coping with the situation. As I said, its implementation must be weighed very seriously. Each such decision must be pertinent to the case.

[Ben-Menahem] Do you still stand behind your recommendation to carry out the deportations that were planned after the recent attacks?

[Yatom] I do not wish to discuss this recent matter. We all know that no deportations have been carried out in the past months.

[Levi] But can it be said that if more terrorist attacks are carried out, there will be no choice but to resort to this measure?

[Yatom] I can only state my view: If terrorist attacks go on—I hope they do not, but if they do—this measure, too, will have to be considered very seriously. There is no doubt about that, in my opinion. [passage omitted]

Arens Warns Settlement Leaders To Obey Law

TA2312184591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens today warned settlement leaders and rabbis from Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] would not look aside if they took the law into their own hands. In a meeting with members of the NRP [National Religious Party] Knesset faction, Mr. Arens said he expects the settlement leaders and rabbis to demonstrate leadership and stop the settlers who act contrary to the law. Otherwise, a great deal of damage would be done.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the NRP faction raised several demands with the defense minister for restoring security to the territories. They included the demand that the IDF begin a wide-ranging operation to round up firearms in Judaea and Samaria. They demanded the imposition of curfews for limited periods in all of Judaea and Samaria, and the deployment of large forces until the weapons belonging to the inciters are found. The defense minister did not respond to the demands.

Labor Conference Endorses Future Golan Settlement

TA2612172891 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] The Labor conference this evening endorsed a new resolution concerning settlement on the Golan Heights. Under the new resolution, the conference will support strengthening settlements throughout the Golan, and a decision on setting up a new settlement will be raised for early approval by the Labor Knesset faction and bureau. Labor's previous resolution stated that the party only supported existing settlements.

Our party affairs correspondent Shlomo Raz reports the conference is currently debating the decision to separate religion from the state.

Speaking in the conference, Knesset Member Yitzhaq Rabin said that we must not come down from the Golan Heights, and the home front is no longer immune to missile attacks.

Envoy Hopes To Discuss 'Real Issues' at Talks

TA2712123091 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] Israel's ambassador to the United States, Zalman Shoval, has said there have been no contacts to resolve the issue of the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation to the peace talks in Washington. The talks are due to resume on January 7th, having been adjourned with the two sides still sitting in the corridor of the State Department after the Palestinians and the Jordanians refused to talk face-to-face with the Israelis as a single team. Our reporter Alan Ben-'Ami heard more about the prospects of the talks when he spoke to Ambassador Shoval in Tel Aviv today.

[Begin recording] [Shoval] There have not been any contacts, which I think is regrettable. I mean, it is not just the technical point. If you want to talk about peace, I think the minimum one has to do is to establish direct links of communication. So far, as I said, I don't think this has worked out.

[Ben-'Ami] From what you said, then one can expect some more corridor diplomacy when talks resume in Washington?

[Shoval] I think that would be unfortunate—not that the corridor diplomacy was a waste of time. I have reminded President Bush that there had been a ping-pong diplomacy before relations with China took up, but it would be regrettable if we can't get down to the real issues next time we meet, and I would like to say that it really depends on the Palestinians and the Jordanians to make up their minds whether they come to Washington for symbolics or to talk about substance. I think they must have recognized by now that they made a mistake the last time in Washington. Neither the media nor—what's more important—the U.S. Government shared their view that the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation should really cease to function and that from here on there should be two separate delegations altogether. This is not part of the ground rules, and if they have settled that question among themselves—I mean the Jordanians and Palestinians—there's a better chance to change the nature of the talks once they resume in Washington.

[Ben-'Ami] The multilateral talks are still set to begin also and to take place in Moscow. Since then, of course, we have had the breakup of the USSR. Do you see any possibility of the venue being changed? Do you feel there may be a problem now with regard to Russian sponsorship?

[Shoval] There wouldn't be any problem from our point of view, but if the Russians will decide that logistically they may have difficulties to organize these talks, they can take place somewhere else. But I would only hope that they won't be postponed again, because according to the original terms of reference, the multilateral were supposed to take place two weeks after the beginning of the bilaterals, that means two weeks after Madrid, and this has not occurred. So I hope there won't be any further postponement. [end recording]

[In a related report, Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 27 December says Ambassador Shoval told a public forum in Tel Aviv today that "Israel is offering the Palestinians autonomy in which they will conduct their own affairs over what he called 80 percent of their lives, except for defense and foreign affairs." In a recorded passage, Shoval says: "That is the difference between autonomy and a state. There will be no state there, because even if they will want to decide on their

future, we will not be able to agree that the future they refer to will endanger our future. A separate state will not be established there."]

Palestinians Vow To 'Redouble' Peace Efforts

TA2412095891 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Dec 91 p A3

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[Excerpt] Six leading members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace process yesterday held a news conference at al-Hakawati theater in East Jerusalem. The six were: Faysal al-Husayni, the delegation's head who had stayed in Jerusalem during the last round of talks; Hanan 'Ashrawi, the delegation's spokesperson; Sa'ib 'Urayqat; Ghassan al-Khatib; Sami al-Kilani; and Mamduh al-'Akir.

The six accused Israel of responsibility for the deadlock in the talks over the framework for the negotiations. They claimed that Israel's lack of seriousness regarding the peace process had been proved in Washington. It has also become evident that Israel is employing every possible means, including provocations such as the accelerated establishment of new settlements, to force the Palestinians to be the first to announce that they were quitting the process. "Nevertheless, not only will we continue to participate in the peace process," declared Dr. Mamduh al-'Akir, "but we shall redouble our efforts."

The delegation members further claimed that Israel had tried to turn the Palestinian delegation into a subcommittee and thus blur their Palestinian national identity to facilitate the implementation of the autonomy plan according to Israel's views. [passage omitted]

Gen. Shahaq on Procurement Plan, Terrorism

TA2712095291 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Dec 91 pp A1, A8

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Major General Amnon Shahaq, the deputy chief of staff, held a news conference detailing the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] procurement plan and said that the Air Force will procure various types of additional aircraft, including the Qurnas-2000 [Phantom] and a small number of Yas'urs [Sikorsky CH-53's]. The Navy will continue to upgrade its missile boats. The establishment of the home front command will not result in a need for additional positions.

Gen. Shahaq added that the IDF will continue to procure Merkava tanks and that some of them will be transferred to the reserves. The old tanks will be refurbished and armored personnel carriers will continue to be purchased. "This, of course, is built around taking risks, but the final aim is to free more funds for procurement."

Gen. Shahaq reported on organizational changes in the IDF. He said that the safety department has been canceled and the offices of the chief education officer and the paramilitary youths have been combined. The National Defense College and the National Staff College have also been joined together. The number of reserve duty days has been cut and the number of career Army soldiers has been reduced. "We will continue to cut reserve duty so that whoever has served in combat duty and has reached the age of 45 or 46 will join the civil defense, unless he is exempted totally from reserve duty. This plan will not affect all the IDF professions, but in principle a 50-year-old reserve soldier will be released from the Army. That will save funds, and we can do it, because we have increased the size of the drafts," Shahaq said.

He said the IDF will continue to improve the officer level in the Army and will try to maintain the qualitative level of the career Army. Gen. Shahaq added that the IDF will expand the Army's regular companies and the Border Police will receive more standing Army soldiers and will set up a regular Army company to replace the reserve units.

Referring to the organization of the ground forces, Gen. Shahaq said that there have been and will continue to be changes implemented in the Ground Forces Command and that budgetary allocations will be decided on to meet manpower needs. The IDF will continue to invest funds in building and in the officers school and the school for squad commanders. Gen. Shahaq also said that in 1991, the IDF fulfilled its missions and saved tens of millions of shekels.

Gen. Shahaq also dealt with terrorist attacks in 1991. There were 447 attacks inside the country, of which 236 were shooting incidents, 36 involved fragmentation grenades, and 175 cases involved the planting of explosives. In a total of 3,543 incidents, 524 perpetrators were caught.

There were 33 attacks from across the borders in 1991. Some 42 percent involved infiltrations, 22 percent involved light weapons fire, and 36 percent were shelling incidents. The data also show that the number of attacks by Amal dropped significantly, while Hizballah attacks were dominant.

On the border with Jordan, an IDF soldier was killed and nine soldiers were wounded during 1991. In addition, one civilian was killed and three were hurt. In clashes along the Jordanian border, 22 terrorists were killed, two were wounded, and 10 were taken prisoner. Two terrorists attempted to infiltrate the border with Egypt, but they drowned. On the Golan Heights, one IDF soldier was killed during the year.

In Judaea and Samaria, three soldiers and seven civilians were killed during 1991. Some 630 soldiers and 217 civilians were wounded.

In south Lebanon, nine IDF soldiers were killed: six in roadside bomb attacks and three during operations. Not a single civilian was killed in that sector. Gen. Shahaq said that in 1991, the IDF reduced the number of forces

in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, especially soldiers in the reserves. He said a permanent Border Police company in Gaza is much more effective than two companies of reservists.

Discusses Nuclear Threat

TA2612125591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Interview with Major General Amnon Shahaq, deputy chief of staff, by Army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe on 26 December at the end of a news conference with military correspondents at which he presented the Army's annual program—recorded]

[Text] [Menashe] How ready is the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to counter the nuclear threat? Is this reflected in the IDF's annual work program for 1992?

[Shahaq] To the best of my knowledge and luckily for us, there is no nuclear threat in the Middle East today, but this is an evolving issue. The IDF takes a very grave view of it and closely follows the possible evolvement of a nuclear threat in the Middle East. We attacked the Iraqi reactor in 1981 because we wanted to prevent a nuclear threat. The Gulf war exposed wide-ranging nuclear activities in Iraq aimed at acquiring a nuclear capability as fast as possible. There is no doubt that given the present circumstances, Iraq and other countries will pursue their efforts to develop nuclear capability.

On the one hand, the IDF will closely monitor these developments. On the other, there are events outside the Middle East that could affect the evolvement of such a threat, such as what will happen to the nuclear weapons and unemployed nuclear scientists following the disbandment of the Soviet Union. We will have to monitor the situation in terms of intelligence, which is the job of the Intelligence Corps and the intelligence community. Moreover, we will have to start thinking about how to prepare for the eventuality of a nuclear threat, and this process will definitely start in 1992.

[Menashe] In addition to the nuclear threat, the Arab countries are pursuing their buildup of nonconventional weapons, both in terms of quality and quantity.

[Shahaq] That is correct. In the past few months we have seen Syria acquiring modern tanks and artillery guns and better surface-to-surface missiles than it had before. We are not only closely following these events, but also preparing our response. I believe our preparations will wisely counter the woes you have mentioned.

[Menashe] Will the IDF be amenable to a change in its multiyear program in the face of a possible political process?

[Shahaq] First of all, what we presented today was an annual program. We will be amenable to changing both our annual and multiyear programs, to diverting our efforts, and to anticipating new developments. This definitely applies to the multiyear program.

[Menashe] Israel drew lessons concerning intelligence from the Gulf war. You said that long-term intelligence has been given more prominence and funds in the IDF's programs.

[Shahaq] That is correct. Israel has learned its lessons, and the IDF will do what it knows how to do best to be better prepared and to obtain intelligence from places further away from our borders.

[Reporting on Shahaq's news conference, Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 26 December notes: "The deputy chief of staff added that the IDF is trying to reduce the number of troops in Judaea and Samaria, but that occasionally, for limited periods of time, the IDF reinforces its troops there to cope with specific situations."

[In a related report, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 26 December adds: "General Shahaq said the IDF believes Syria is very unlikely to launch a war in 1992, but noted that this assessment could change from one minute to the next."]

Political Committees on 'Verge' of Formation

TA2612185091 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Senior military sources confirmed today that according to the regulations in effect in the territories, the residents are banned from engaging in political activity. Our correspondent, Yoni Ben-Menahem, reports this confirmation came against the background of increasing reports that the preparatory committee of the political action committees is on the verge of completing the formation of these committees. The establishment of these committees and their internal structure is to be announced at the beginning of next month. An office for these committees has been opened in the center of Ramallah, and the journalist Nabhan Khurayshah has been appointed their media spokesman.

King Cables Commonwealth Leaders, Gorbachev

JN2612185191 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn sent cables of congratulation to the presidents of the republics of the new independent commonwealth, in which he expressed his wishes for success in achieving their objectives toward increased progress and affluence for their nations, as well as the promotion of peace and stability worldwide.

His majesty also expressed Jordan's eagerness to promote ties of cooperation and friendship with these states and friendly nations.

His majesty also sent a cable to His Excellency Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, expressing his appreciation and respect, recalling his good personal relationship with Mr. Gorbachev during his tenure as leader of the USSR. He wished him continued good health and well-being.

Similarity Between Gorbachev, Gulf Arabs Seen

JN2612114291 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 26 Dec 91 pp 1, 21

[Editorial: "A Country's Resignation"]

[Text] President Gorbachev has accomplished the great mission to which he has devoted his life. He did not leave the presidency until he was certain that his country had left the international scene and that the great Soviet Union had been transformed into small states, whose leaders are vying with one another to strike against national unity, to ignite civil wars, and to leave the West to enjoy watching the process of suicide that will terminate what existed in the past and what was expected to materialize in the future.

The Soviet Union's resignation came before that of its leader. A superpower exited the political scene before its leader left his office. It now seems certain that the game was bigger than Gorbachev and Yeltsin and greater than the displacement of the Jews, the human rights issue, or the upholding of democracy. It was also greater than the false coup attempt during which "the president" continued to write his memoirs, leaving generals and politicians to fall around him. Such a scenario of collapse makes us almost certain that President Gorbachev received his education at one of the Gulf institutions which, before the Kuwait crisis, had been hiding out of fear for their oil, only to reappear in their true colors after the establishment of the coalition. These institutions have only one aim for themselves, their policy, their money, their culture, their media, and their very heartbeats; namely, the further destruction of this great homeland and additional fragmentation of this great nation. President Gorbachev is not just a Soviet president but a model for those leaders whom the new world order considers to be the only ones capable of destroying their homelands and humiliating their peoples.

So far, the crisis of what was once the Soviet Union does not seem to lie in a shortage of bread or energy nor in grudges and latent potentials for civil wars. The fate of the republics will not be better than that awaiting those who, since the Gulf crisis, have been under the illusion that they can achieve prestige, pride, and security by bearing a grudge against their great homeland or by fomenting hatred between them and the rest of their nation.

We are not distressed about Gorbachev's departure. What hurts us is that the pickax, which pounded the proud head of the Soviet Union until it smashed it, and the Soviet Union's prestige, oil, deterrent weapons, and intercontinental missiles did not protect it from collapse. The defeats of homelands are not accomplished by outside invasion. They come from within when their politicians place their destinies in the hands of others and pay them for finishing the job of slaughtering their brothers.

The Soviet people are not all Gorbachevs, neither are all of our Gulf brothers people who enjoy a deceptive tranquillity under a foreign flag.

Gulf Summit, West's Stand on Democracy Criticized

JN2712094991 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 27 Dec 91 p 16

[Editorial: "Counterfeit Political Dollars..!"]

[Text] The Gulf Cooperation Council summit considered the "liberation of Kuwait" and the collapse of the Soviet Union to be the two most important pieces of evidence about the emergence of a new world order. The United States, as well as nations in West and East Europe, view these two international events from the same perspective. The only difference between the Gulf and the Western perspectives, however, is that each side has its own view of democracy. President Bush has established a specific standard governing any U.S. decision to accord political recognition to any political entity emerging from the Soviet debris. This standard is democracy. In other words, Washington, and surely all of its Western allies as well, will not recognize any fascist regime emerging from the former Soviet Union, nor will it recognize one which does not respect human rights or does not uphold the principles of democracy. This standard is of no value when recognition of, dealings with, or respect for regimes have something to do with a Gulf political system. Moreover, the United States and the other Western regimes view the fascism of any allied regime as a condition for the continuation of this alliance. They view the allied regimes' disrespect for and usurpation of basic human rights as a demonstration of the extent of their commitment toward defending them. They also view democracy as a threat to the traditional relations existing between Washington, London, and other Western capitals on the one hand and the antidemocracy regimes on the other. In fact, democracy as a threat to oil is more disturbing for Western circles.

A reading of the statement from the recent Kuwait Gulf summit reveals the hatred harbored by most Gulf regimes not only for Iraq's citizens and the Arab homeland, but for their own citizens as well. Therefore, the statement avoided any reference to democracy, popular participation, respect for human rights, or freedom of expression and thought. The statement stressed the importance of keeping the Gulf states within their oil shells to protect them from their envious "brothers." This is an artless protection, because oil no longer belongs to these brothers; it is their curse and tragedy.

It is ironic that the Kuwait Declaration, issued after the final statement of the Gulf summit, called for "respecting the sovereignty of each state over its own resources" and avoided reference to the sovereignty of each state over its own territory and decisionmaking. Needless to say, some of our Gulf brothers view oil with more sanctity than the homeland, freedom of decisionmaking, will, and pride.

Congratulations to the world for its new order whose banner reads the liberation of Kuwait, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the building of walls of rancor and hatred among the Arabs. We hope that we all will have new achievements in the new year along the path toward the new order, which is slaying the children of Iraq, demanding democracy in the former Soviet Union, and lending a deaf ear to what the fascist regimes in our Third World are doing.

Let us beware of the counterfeit political dollars with which the United States is flooding the market of the new world.

Speaker Stresses Deputies' Loyalty to King

JN2412101491 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 24 Dec 91 pp 1, 18

[By Ahmad al-Husban]

[Excerpts] House of Representatives Speaker Dr. 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyat has said: It is our right to be proud of the democratic experiment which has proved to be a genuine democracy respected [illegible] the world. [passage omitted]

In an exclusive statement to AL-DUSTUR, Dr. 'Arabiyat stressed that all sides rally around the Hashemite leadership. He noted that those who withheld confidence from the government are not less loyal to the homeland and the throne than those who gave their vote of confidence. He said that withholding confidence was based on political convictions and stands that do not conflict with loyalty to the homeland's leader.

He pointed out that in their speeches and statements, all the deputies who withheld confidence from the government expressed their loyalty and faithfulness to his majesty the king, and that they did not withhold confidence from the speech from the throne, but they withheld confidence due to specific political convictions related to their interpretation of the conflict with the Zionist enemy. He said granting or withholding confidence is a constitutional right enjoyed by the deputies. [passage omitted]

On commuting the sentences against the members of Muhammad Army organization, Dr. 'Arabiyat said: The Jordanian people are accustomed to His Majesty King Husayn's sympathy and love. Those who made a mistake or were deluded have enjoyed this noble gesture which confirms the spirit of the one family. [passage omitted]

Released Journalist Arrives From Damascus

JN2412090691 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 24 Dec 91 p 1

[Text] Amman—Jordanian journalist Yusuf al-Husban arrived in Amman yesterday from Damascus after he was released within the framework of the recent release of a large number of political detainees, including a number of members of Palestinian factions and Islamic organizations.

Before his arrest, Yusuf al-Husban worked as an editor in the English section of the PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY, WAFA.

Body Found in Beirut Said To Be Buckley's

NC2712054791 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] A body was found on the airport road at about 0100 today and taken to the American University hospital. Some sources said that the body is that of former U.S. hostage William Buckley.

Further Details on Discovery

NC2712074891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0625 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] Regarding the hostage issue, civil defense sources today confirmed last night's radio report about the body. Civil Defense Director Elie Hunayn has informed us that the B'abda police detachment asked the main civil defense center to provide a civil defense vehicle and to go to the airport road. A body was found in a pit on the right-hand side of the road at the crossroads leading to Harat Hurayk, near the airport bridge. It was wrapped in a blanket tied with nylon ribbons. The remains, a collection of bones and hair, were taken to the American University hospital.

Instructions were given to criminal investigators and to Pathologist Ahmad Harati to examine and identify the body. Major Raghib Ziyad, commander of the al-Awza'i police detachment, went to the university hospital last night and prepared a preliminary report on the case.

American University hospital and security sources kept silent about the issue.

A short time ago our security correspondent reported that Captain Mazlum, commander of the Harat Hurayk police station, had received a telephone call from an unidentified person, who said that a foreigner's body was on the airport road. The caller hung up quickly.

Our correspondent adds that the military authorities first sent a number of military men in civilian clothes to the site to check on the report. They were followed later by a military unit.

Formerly Unknown Group Releases Video of Germans

NC2612202191 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] REUTER has just reported that the group which holds the last two Western hostages in Lebanon released a video cassette showing their two German prisoners wearing suits and celebrating Christmas.

The kidnapping group called the Struggers for Freedom [al-Munadilin min Ajl al-Hurriyah] sent a statement to a world news agency in Beirut and said it insists on the release of the Hammadi brothers held in Germany in return for the release of their two hostages.

Germany Urged To Release Hammadi's

LD2612213591 Hamburg DPA in German 2020 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Beirut (DPA)—Heinrich Struebig and Thomas Kemptner, the German hostages being held in Lebanon, appealed to Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl today to pardon the Hammadi brothers, imprisoned in Germany, in return for their release. Kemptner read a prepared statement, seen on a videotape, which had been passed to the Beirut newspaper AL-NAHAR. The video was accompanied by a letter written by the kidnappers, in which they expressed regret over the lack of "positive aspects" in the hostage question.

In the statement, handwritten in Arabic, the kidnappers warned Bonn against "stubbornness." Germany must not give in to the United States, which rejects a release of the Hammadi brothers. "We insist that the German Government should react to right and logic and should realize that it must release our brothers," the statement said. The Hammadi brothers were sentenced to lengthy prison terms in Germany for hijacking an American plane and other terrorist acts.

The video shows Kemptner (31) and Struebig (49) sitting in front of a Christmas tree, looking relaxed and drinking fruit juice with Christmas carols playing in the background. Kemptner read a statement in English, in which he thanked his kidnappers for their "humanity" and urged Federal Chancellor Kohl "to use his authority to pardon Muhammad 'Ali and 'Abbas Hammadi." Their return is linked "absolutely with the release of the Hammadi brothers."

Kemptner and Struebig, members of a private aid organization, were kidnapped around two-and-a-half years ago and are the last Western hostages in Lebanon. The kidnappers, who are Muslim fundamentalists linked closely to the Hammadi brothers, said in their statement that they published the videorecording at Christmas to show that "the German spies are in excellent shape."

Hammadi Source Comments

NC2712062991 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] A source close to the Hammadi family has said that the ongoing contacts to release the two German hostages have not yielded a final result. The source described the German guarantees concerning the release of brothers Hammadi as unsatisfactory.

Khaddam on Peace Talks, USSR, Libya, Iraq

JN2412173291 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic
23 Dec 91 p 19

[Text] Doha, QNA—Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam has stressed that the security of the Arabian Gulf States is the concern of these states, and said: We will not hesitate to assist, back, or participate and lend support if our brothers in the Gulf ask us to do so.

In an interview with the Qatari newspaper AL-RAYAH, published yesterday, 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam said that the Damascus Declaration signed by the Arabian Gulf states and both Egypt and Syria is, in the first place, for the assistance of our brothers in the Gulf, and they are the ones who decide and define the form and manner of this assistance, as well as its timing.

Regarding developments in the Middle East peace process, he said the success of the U.S. initiative and the realization of peace, on the basis of the invitation on which the peace process was based, is something important that serves the region and realizes our objectives, represented by the restoration of Arab territories and rights, and on this basis we accepted to participate in the peace conference.

He said, however, that it is noted that pressures are being exerted on the Arab side to grant concessions, while rewards are given to the Israeli enemy, pointing out in this respect to the cancellation by the United States of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism.

In this respect, the Syrian vice president pointed out Israel's prevarications and its attempts to evade the requisites of just peace.

He said, in this context, Israel has rejected an international conference held under UN auspices and the collective international work for the realization of peace, while it calls for holding a multilateral conference to discuss issues other than withdrawal from the Arab territories and the national rights of the Palestinian people.

Answering a question on whether Syria has received U.S. assurances on the implementation of the UN resolutions concerning participation in the peace process, the Syrian vice president said that there have been no such assurances, but there is a clear American position. He added that the Americans have clearly told us that they stand for the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and that they reject the settlement policy and the annexation of any part of the Golan to Israel.

He added that we have considered this position to be serious and on this basis we dealt seriously with the U.S. initiative.

He stressed that Israel will bear responsibility before the international community for the failure of the peace negotiations if they do not succeed.

Responding to a question on what is being said that the Arab parties have participated in the current peace process while they lack the elements of political, military, and economic strength, therefore, the anticipated results would not be in favor of Arab rights, 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam said the elements of balance are not only material ones because the determination of the people is what constitutes the true balance.

Regarding the repeal of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism, Khaddam said this will not serve the cause of peace at all because no facts or events have changed.

As for the changes in the Soviet Union, the Syrian vice president said the collapse of this country is a loss for the entire world, adding that the international equilibrium was a basic condition for the realization of global stability, therefore, the collapse of this equilibrium will create new circumstances that will lead to new international conditions, the course of which is difficult to detect right now.

In his interview with the Qatari AL-RAYAH newspaper, the Syrian vice president said the Arabs have to carefully monitor developments following the collapse of the Soviet Union, pool their potential, and do all they can, because if they do not move effectively in accordance with their pan-Arab interests, they will be subject to circumstances for a long time that do not serve their interests or their economies.

Remarking on the situation in Iraq, 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam said the Iraqi regime has in effect collapsed, adding that all the Iraqi people are against this regime, and the opposition is in harmony with all that is presented by every Iraqi, both inside and outside the country.

In reply to a question on the Western campaign against Libya, the Syrian vice president warned that any aggression against Libya would lead to dangerous results in the region. He added that any country which has a viewpoint against Libya should resort to the United Nations.

Regarding internal issues in Syria, 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam said that the democracy available in Syria is one that is in full harmony with this stage of our social development.

Afghanistan

Missile Attack on Kabul Leaves Six Dead

LD2612161291 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Six Kabul citizens were martyred today as a result of the firing of surface-to-surface missiles by extremists; six others, including two children, were wounded.

The BIA military section reports that the wounded were transferred to hospital and are under treatment.

The extremists today fired eight surface-to-surface missiles from northeast and west of Kabul city hitting residential areas in Kabul city's 4th, 5th and 11th wards. They have inflicted heavy material damage on our compatriots. A missile hit the Kala Kashef mosque, destroying it and burning copies of the Holy Koran and dozens of teaching books.

The missiles were of the Sakr type, which—contrary to the tenets of the sacred religion of Islam, human dignity, and all international norms—were supplied by Pakistani militarists for creating terror and massacres in our country, and for the continuation of the fratricidal war in our homeland.

Kabul citizens condemned these criminal actions by the Pakistani-backed extremists as inhuman and un-Islamic.

Bangladesh

Spokesman on Situation Along Border With Burma

BK2612163691 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] The situation along the Bangladesh-Myanmar [Burma] border is (?contained) and the efforts are continuing to further defuse the tension. A foreign office spokesman said in Dhaka today Bangladesh has offered to post a helicopter at the disposal of Myanmar ambassador in Dhaka to travel to the spot where the Bangladesh border outpost was attacked last Saturday [21 December]. Bangladesh has also proposed a flag meeting of the two sides and the response of the Burmese Government is awaited. The spokesman said the morale of the Bangladesh people along the border is very high and there has been no exodus of our people from the border.

Amnesty Offered to Members of Outlawed Party

BK2512043091 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0130 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] The government has asked the members of the so-called Sarbahara Party [underground Marxist organization] to surrender along with their unauthorized arms by the 8th of next month. No action will be taken against those who will surrender by the January 8th deadline. An official handout says the members of the so-called Sarbahara Party and a member of similar organization are engaged in unlawful and terrorist activities in the districts of Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jessore, Magura, (Dinaida), Narail, Rajbari, (Syedpur), Madarpir, Barisal, Dhalokati, Firozpur, and (Naushkendi). Public life is disturbed due to their unlawful terrorist and antisocial activities. The government is determined to take stern measures against those who will not surrender within the stipulated time. No mercy will be shown to anyone obstructing the drive against terrorism after the deadline is over.

Dhaka Pleased With Outcome of SAARC Summit

BK2212162491 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The foreign minister says Bangladesh considers the just-concluded sixth SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit in Colombo a success and hopes the ongoing cooperation among the seven South Asian nations will be further consolidated in the future. Mr. Mustafizur Rahman was talking to newsmen in Dhaka today. He said Bangladesh is pleased with the outcome of the summit, and its ideas on poverty alleviation found acceptance and appreciation in the conference. The foreign minister said the Bangladesh delegation under the leadership of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has played an active and constructive role at the summit. The prime minister's efforts were directed at keeping SAARC on the rails and preserving the momentum, viability, and credibility of the organization as the major harmonizing force in the region. The main thrust of her address, he said, was an appeal for combined action by all SAARC countries to alleviate poverty in the region.

India

Recognition Accorded to Russia, Other Republics

BK2612160891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] India today announced its decision to accord formal recognition to the Russian Federation and other republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union. Communication to this effect is on way to the presidents of the republics. Disclosing this to newsmen in New Delhi today, the foreign secretary, Mr. J.N. Dixit, said that India will open diplomatic missions in some of the republics, including Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Uzbekistan. Some missions will be upgraded. These missions will also get concurrent accreditation for the other republics.

Foreign Secretary Comments

BK2712121091 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1600 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] India today announced its decision to accord formal recognition to the Russian Federation and other republics in the Soviet Union. Communications to this effect are in the process of reaching the presidents of the

republics. Disclosing this to newsmen in New Delhi today, the foreign secretary, Mr. J.N. Dixit, said that India will open diplomatic missions in some of the republics, including Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Uzbekistan. Some missions like in Tashkent will be upgraded. Speaking to Doordarshan [television] later, Mr. Dixit said the recent developments in the Soviet Union were reviewed by the prime minister and the external affairs minister today as the continuation of earlier reviews:

[Begin Dixit recording] Today after consultations and through appropriate political processes, the prime minister and the external affairs minister of India have decided to accord formal political, legal, and diplomatic recognition to all the Soviet republics beginning with Russia and the other 11 republics of what used to be the Soviet Union. We hope to open new missions in some of the republics, upgrade some of the existing missions, and concurrently accredit some of these missions to cover the 11 republics with which we will now have separate and independent relations. We are also in the process of finalizing position papers and so on on new arrangements to be made for political, commercial, technological, and defense relationships with the various republics which have emerged from the past political entity which was the Soviet Union. The prime minister of India is going to send all ... [changes thought] Actually, communications are in the process of going from our prime minister to the presidents of these republics conveying this message of recognition and India's decision to strengthen, expand, and improve the relations with each of these republics individually. [end recording]

President on Terrrorism, Other Issues

BK2712095091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] The president, Mr. R. Venkataraman, has suggested limiting the size of the ministries to one-tenth of the elected legislature. Inaugurating the two-day governors' conference in New Delhi today, he said that this will discourage defection, lead to saving in public expenditure, and help channel resources to the welfare of the people. Referring to the enormous size of the ministries in certain states, Mr. Venkataraman said there are instances where almost every legislator of the ruling party has had to be placated by a min stership or ministerial type of sinecure. The president asked the conference to consider debarring the defector from any public office for the duration of the legislature to which he had been returned by the electorate. Welcoming the austerity measures announced by the prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the president stressed the need to cut down unproductive expenditure. Mr. Venkataraman said that he has canceled his proposed visit to Chile, Turkey, and Italy in view of the foreign exchange crisis facing the country.

Mr. Venkataraman expressed serious concern over the growing menace of terrorism and called for coordinated measures among the concerned states for tackling the problem. He regretted that the militant activities in Kashmir are being fueled by the supply of arms, ammunition, and training from across the border.

Referring to the incidents of kidnapping, the president said that such incidents are barbaric and represent a cowardly mentality.

About elections in Punjab, the president expressed the hope that the deployment of security forces in the state will create a conducive atmosphere for holding free and fair elections. Mr. Venkataraman said that the situation in Uttar Pradesh and Haryna needs a close watch in view of the spilling over of terrorist violence into these states from Punjab due to pressure on the militants in the state. He expressed satisfaction over the unilateral cease-fire by the ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam] and release of hostages in Assam. The president called for an integrated regional strategy to meet the Naxalite [Maoist guerrillas] violence in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Orissa.

On the antidefection law, Mr. Venkataraman suggested that the government should give thought to avoid discord between the legislature and the judiciary over the matter. About the Cauvery water dispute, the president said there is a well-established mechanism to deal with interstate water disputes. He urged the governors to suggest an amicable settlement to such sensitive issues as interstate border and river water disputes.

Six governors, including Punjab and Haryna, have apprised the conference of the situation in their states. The conference is being attended by the vice president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma; the prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao; his cabinet colleagues, besides governors and lieutenant governors. The conference placed on record its deep sense of sorrow at the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Recalling the outstanding services of the former prime minister, the conference paid tributes to him for modernizing the economy and advancing India's image and its interests abroad.

Senior Janata Dal Leader Ajit Singh Expelled

BK2612124691 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Mr. Ajit Singh, a senior Janata Dal leader, has been expelled from the primary membership of the party for six years for antiparty activities. The decision was taken by the Janata Dal president, Mr. S.R. Bommai, after consulting other party leaders and Political Affairs Committee [PAC] in New Delhi today. Announcing this at a press conference, the party spokesman, Mr. Hari Kishore Singh, asserted that there will be no split in the party because of the action against Mr. Ajit Singh. He said that Mr. Ajit Singh was invited to the PAC meeting, but he did not attend. Asked whether any leader opposed the action at the PAC meeting, the spokesman said there was no dissenting voice.

Party Chief Sees Split Likely

BK2712082091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] The Janata Dal leader, Mr. Rashid Masood, says that Mr. Ajit Singh's expulsion has signaled the party's disintegration. He told PTI that the party is now heading for a split. The Rajasthan unit of the party has termed the expulsion of Mr. Ajit Singh as unconstitutional and undesirable and said that it will lead to a split in the party at all levels.

Expellee To Form 'Real Janata Dal'

BK2712125691 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] Mr. Ajit Singh says he will soon form what he calls the real Janata Dal. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi today, Mr. Ajit Singh, who was expelled from the Janata Dal yesterday, said the present Janata Dal existed only in name, but it was never organized properly. Blaming Mr. V.P. Singh for the split in the party, he alleged that the former prime minister never believed in collective leadership. Mr. Ajit Singh said Mr. V.P. Singh put his trust in launching agitations to get votes instead of building the party. Claiming the support of about half of the Janata Dal MP's [Members of Parliament], Mr. Ajit Singh said he will soon convene the national executive of the real Janata Dal to decide the future course of action. Answering a question on the possibility of his group merging with the Congress-I, he said realignment of political forces is a continuing process.

* Janata Dal Faction Seen Ready To Join Congress (I)

92AS0307A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 22 Nov 91 pp 1, 5

[Article by Kumar Anand: "One Faction of Janata Dal Ready to Join Congress (I) if Rao Takes the Initiative"]

[Text] New Delhi (21 November)—A special faction of the Janata Dal is ready to form a coalition with the Congress (I) party. This camp does not even object to joining the Congress as long as Prime Minister Narsimha Rao takes the initiative.

According to some Janata Dal leaders, some Congress (I) leaders have made the proposal in the name of the prime minister. The leaders who want to join the Congress (I) are not willing to commit themselves until they have an opportunity to speak with the prime minister directly. Even though some Congress (I) leaders have talked on behalf of the prime minister, the Janata Dal leaders wish to talk directly with the prime minister. The prime minister is busy traveling at home and abroad. As a result of the outcome of by-elections, political polarization could begin in early December. The prime minister is going to France and Venezuela on 25 November and returning on 1 December.

On behalf of the Congress, Subramaniam Swami; the prime minister's personal secretary, Jitendra Prasad; Ghulam Nabi Azad; Balram Jakhad; and Arjun Singh led all the negotiations. The by- election results clearly indicate that the Congress (I) cannot get a clear majority on its own in the tenth Lok Sabha. Therefore, it has to get support from outside. Mr. Biju Patnayak, chief minister of Orissa, had met with the prime minister after his return from abroad. He is a strong supporter of cooperation with the Congress (I). Rama Krishna Hegde had expressed this desire openly. Ajit Singh is not opposed to the Congress (I) either; he wants to cooperate with the Congress. In answer to a question, he said, "I am not saying that we join the Congress; however, we can come to some kind of agreement. Bulandshehar Lok Sabha seat was won by the BJP with only 35 percent of the vote."

At the possibility of his associates joining the Congress, he said, "I have doubts about their joining the Congress. Perhaps Mr. Hegde is ready. Biju Patnayak only wants to form a coalition. If we want to defeat the communal forces in Uttar Pradesh, then we need the support of the Congress (I)." According to our sources, if the prime minister tries, he can work out an agreement with Ajit Singh.

One example of the efforts that the Congress (I) is making is the Lok Sabha by-election incident related to Madhepura. Chandra Shekhar was in Patna on 14 November. He received a telephone call from Jitendra Prasad, who said that the prime minister wanted him to have his candidate run for election in Madhepura with the support of the Congress (I). Chandra Shekhar replied that if the prime minister wanted it, then he should talk to him himself. The prime minister did not talk himself; however, Jayant Malhotra called back. Mr. Malhotra also emphasized this proposal on behalf of the prime minister. When Chandra Shekhar got angry, Malhotra said he had called on Jitendra Prasad's insistence. Neither the prime minister called himself, nor did Chandra Shekhar had his candidate withdraw from the election.

Meanwhile, the Janata Dal defeat in the by-election made its leaders angry. V. P. Singh wanted to do something about it. When he failed to get rid of the opponents, he even started to think about forming a new political party. This is what people close to him told us. Ajit Singh does not want to take any initiative on his own. He was waiting for party president Somappa Rayappa Bommai and V. P. Singh to make the first move. Mr. Bommai asked for 2 weeks to reorganize the party and take care of its internal discord. He still had not succeeded in doing so, however, after 2 months.

Mr. V. P. Singh was upset that during his trip to Baadh and Gaya, Bihar's chief minister, Laluprasad Yadav, did not meet him. State party president Ramsunder Das did not go on the trip because he was not informed on time. Ever since Mr. Das had organized a meeting for Ajit Singh in Patna, Mr. V. P. Singh has been angry at him.

However, in this changing situation, V. P. Singh telephoned Ramsunder Das, invited him to Delhi, and talked with him today.

Mr. V. P. Singh is perturbed by Mulayam Singh Yadav's statement about having the Congress (I) work with them. Mr. V. P. Singh was planning to form a new front with his cooperation.

Mr. V. P. Singh and Ajit Singh have gone out of Delhi today. Ramvilas Paswan has arrived today and will return tomorrow. Sharad Yadav is still busy in his election. It is expected that all leaders will return on 25 November. According to party spokesman Harkishore Singh, the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) will have its meeting at that time.

Regardless of what these leaders say in public, their private conversations indicate that they are disappointed by the by- election. They all believe that internal conflicts have caused it. According to Ramvilas Paswan, "the party cannot function this way. We have to make some difficult decisions. It does not matter how big a leader is affected by that." These difficult decisions mean attempts to push each other out of the party. Every Janata Dal leader has said bad things about each other in public. Everybody has prepared files about others. These decisions will also push the leaders toward polarization.

Iran

Foreign Ministry on Recognition of Republics

LD2512173291 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] The Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has issued a statement which announces: As respect for the will and wishes of nations is always given top priority in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and with regard to the recent developments in the former Soviet Union and the will of the people of those republics to achieve independence, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as of today recognizes the independence of the countries of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federated Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Georgia, the Republic of Ukraine, and the Republic of Belarus.

On these bases, the Islamic Republic of Iran, while establishing diplomatic ties at the highest level, announces its readiness to expand its political, economic, and cultural cooperation with those independent countries, particularly with Muslim and neighboring countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the realization of the will and wishes of these nations and hopes that these countries, under new conditions, will enter the international community and be able to play their constructive roles in achieving prosperity for their nations and stabilizing regional and international peace and security.

It should be added that as of this date the Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy in Moscow will be the official representative office of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Russian Federated Republic.

Khamene'i Views Demise of Socialist World

LD2612121291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Excerpts] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, this morning attended a special ceremony of eulogists of the prophet's family, on the auspicious anniversary of the birth of the great lady of humanity, Her Holiness Fatimah Zahra', peace be upon her, at Imam Khomeyni's Hoseyniyeh prayer house. [passage omitted]

Commenting on the downfall and demise of the great so-called socialist and workers empire, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said it was proof that civilizations based on bullying and wealth are evil. He added: With the fall and demise of evil, good will not automatically replace it; we should strive and work hard to establish and strengthen the foundations of good, and perform our duties by learning from the life-styles of the prophet's family. [passage omitted]

On Rights of Women

LD2612084691 Tehran IRNA in English 1744 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA—The leader of the Islamic revolution said here Wednesday that degredation of women's real personality by American and European cultures proved the corruption of the so-called civilized Western world.

"The existence of a problem called the 'issue of women' in various human societies indicates a kind of deviation, short-sightedness and misunderstanding of human issues," Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i said.

The leader made the remarks in his speech to a group of women on the occasion of Women's Week marking the birth anniversary of the lady of light, Fatima Zahra' (peace be upon her), the illustrious daughter of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) who is regarded as model par excellence for the womankind.

The modern world, said the ayatollah, humanity, despite its elaborate cultural measures, has yet to find a right and clear attitude towards women and subsequently towards men.

He also denounced the Euro-American culture for its ignorance of women's rights for years, saying "the principles and customs of the (pagan) Roman empire form the basis of the Western culture and civilization, and we condemn this for its humiliation of women."

To solve the issue, the message of revelation which contains many important points about the real issues relevant to both women and men should be taken as a guiding light, the leader said.

"The holy Koran is not content only with preaching but rather introduces models to women to train them spiritually and guide them towards perfection," he added.

In related news, President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in a meeting with a group of women from various walks of life on this auspicious occasion lauded them for having pioneered a social ethical path in the world.

The president said the instructions put at the disposal of women by Islam about the way and standards of life were unique in the world and that every one should be thankful for this.

Islam has offered women a rationally moderate and logical way of living quite consistent with their inherent nature, he said.

Nepal & Bhutan

Prime Minister Koirala Lauds SAARC Summit

BK2312144091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1219 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Kathmandu, Dec 23 (AFP)—Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala said Monday [23 December] that the uncertainty surrounding the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had lifted following the Colombo summit.

"SAARC has become a political and economic vehicle for regional cooperation among the South Asian countries," Koirala said on his return here from Sri Lanka, adding that the importance of the group had been boosted by the meeting.

The Colombo summit replaced one scheduled to take place there last month that was cancelled following the withdrawal of the king of Bhutan who cited domestic reasons for staying away.

Leaders from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Bhutan and the Maldives discussed ways to alleviate poverty in the region and the fight against terrorism, Koirala said.

He also discussed the flood of ethnic Nepalese refugees from Bhutan, saying the king of Bhutan was aware of the issue.

The king "is aware of the international trend," Koirala said. "I hope that he would do something to prevent it."

But Koirala declined to say whether he discussed Nepal's support for refugees from Bhutan, where many people have alleged that ethnic Nepalese have been persecuted and driven out of the country by the indigenous Buddhist Bhutanese.

"Nepal is committed to democracy and human rights all over the world but Nepal will not interfere in the internal affairs of any country nor would she like anyone to interfere in her own internal affairs."

Earlier Monday, the Nepalese prime minister met with his Thai counterpart Anan Panyarachun during a stopover in Bangkok to discuss cooperation between the two countries.

Pakistan

Spokesman's Statement on Russia, SAARC Summit

BK2612163091 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Pakistan will support the move to enable the Russian Federation to assume the seat of the former Soviet Union in the UN Security Council and General Assembly. A foreign office spokesman said in Islamabad today that Pakistan regards the Russian Federation as the successor to the Soviet Union. The spokesman said steps would be taken by Pakistan and the Russian Federation to develop cooperation in various fields following the recent visit of Vice President Rutskoy to Pakistan. He said official-level contacts will be held to give final shape to the agreements reached to promote cooperation between the two countries in the political, economic, commercial, scientific, and cultural fields. He said Pakistan has already recognized the seven republics that are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Pakistan is also considering granting recognition to other republics of the Commonwealth; a decision in this regard will be taken soon. He said Pakistan appreciates the role played by outgoing Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev toward the development of relations with Pakistan, and for a political solution to the Afghanistan issue. He also lauded Gorbachev's efforts for the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy.

On the recent South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] summit in Colombo, the foreign office spokesman said Pakistan is satisfied with the outcome of the summit and feels that it has enabled the organization to resume its march toward its goal. The spokesman said the heads of government and states have also resolved to relax trade restrictions in the region through gradual steps. He said the summit has also decided to hold the special session of the SAARC standing committee, with the participation of the foreign secretaries, in Colombo during next April. This meeting will consider various proposals to make the organization an effective institution for the welfare of the people of South Asia. The heads of government and states have also agreed to observe the current decade as the Decade of the Girl Child by the SAARC member countries. He said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had meetings with the leaders of the SAARC member countries, including Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, in Colombo.

On the prime minister's visit to Singapore, the spokesman said Nawaz Sharif had detailed talks with Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Senior Minister Lee Kuan

Yew on encouraging foreign investment in Pakistan, and on benefiting from Singapore's experience of rapid economic development.

Sharif on Need To Resolve Disputes With India

BK2612132891 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1300 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, has emphasized the need of resolving differences between Pakistan and India so that the two countries could (?curtail) defense expenditure and divert the same toward development projects. Talking to a delegation of Indian journalists, which called on him in Lahore today, the prime minister appreciated the efforts of the Indian journalists for mobilization of public opinion for the solution of issues like Kashmir, Siachen, and Wular barrage. He said that journalists and private organizations should play their roles to resolve the 45-year-old differences between the two countries.

On Kashmir, Afghanistan, Other Issues

BK2712101491 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 27 Dec 91

[Text] Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has said that the Kashmir problem is the biggest obstacle to the improvement of Pakistan-India relations. This was stated by him in an interview with editors of AL-SHARQ and (MUSLEMUN) while attending the sixth summit of the Islamic Conference Organization in Dakar. The prime minister said that despite Pakistan's considerable efforts in this regard at all levels—bilateral, regional and international—no results have been achieved so far. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said that the Indian forces are killing Kashmiris in the occupied valley and the latter are being subjected to oppression and atrocities. Even a famine-like situation has been created due to an artificial shortage of foodstuffs. The prime minister said that India has to settle the issue, and the sooner it does, the better.

On Afghanistan, the prime minister expressed the hope that the problem would soon be resolved politically.

On nuclear nonproliferation in South Asia, he said that Pakistan has already initiated talks with India in this regard, adding that Pakistan has also proposed a conference of five countries to settle the issue.

Answering a question relating to the independence of Azerbaijan and the Central Asian republics, Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan enjoys historical, religious, and cultural ties with these republics and their independence will provide an opportunity to establish trade and cultural contacts with them.

The prime minister said that his government is committed to developing the country. Bold policy decisions have been taken in this regard, including privatization, deinvestment, and other steps, such as the abolition of unnecessary restrictions and regulations. The government's focus is on improving the economy. He said that Pakistan is on its way to a free market economy. The prime minister said that the government has abolished all restrictions on setting up industries and foreign investors can now invest in Pakistan with 100 percent ownership. There has been an increase in Pakistan's exports and the economy has improved.

In reply to a question, the prime minister said that he has always supported the proposal for cooperation between the government and the opposition.

Despite the Gulf crisis and other factors during the current fiscal year, the Gross Domestic Product has increased to 5.6 percent from 4.6 percent during the last year as a result of the government's determined efforts. According to the latest survey released by the Asian Development Bank, this is the highest rate in South Asia. Exports increased by 20 percent despite the trend of a slump in the world market. There has been considerable increase in the foreign exchange reserves as well.